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WOULD ENGLAND SIDE WITH JAPAN AGAINST THE UNITED STATES?

BY MAYO W. HAZELTINE.

THE cordial tenor of the reference made to Japan by Mr. Roosevelt in his recent annual message has allayed the irritation caused at Tokio by the relegation of Japanese children in San Francisco to schools attended only by Orientals, and has for the present put an end to the apprehension that we might find ourselves drifting into war with a people whom we have helped to elevate to the front rank of civilized nations.

Unfortunately, whole peoples, like individuals, have their moments of folly or of madness, and such moments are peculiarly apt to occur in the hour of elation justified by triumph over a formidable antagonist. Those Americans whose memories stretch back to the years immediately following Lee's surrender at Appomattox will recall the truculent attitude assumed soon thereafter by our Government toward France and Great Britain, an attitude which resulted in the early withdrawal of the French troops from Mexico, and in the Treaty of Washington, by which Great Britain agreed to submit the "Alabama" claims to arbitration. It is not surprising that the Japanese should have evinced the same self-complacency and sensitive susceptibility to affront after their memorable victory over the colossal Russian Empire. We deem it, therefore, at least conceivable that the exasperation of his high-spirited subjects at the treatment of Japanese children in San Francisco might have compelled the Mikado to make a demand for reparation, to which we should have been unable to yield, and so we might have become involved in war without any deliberate intention of provoking hostilities on either side. Wars have often begun in that unpremeditated, accidental way, and so they will be begun hereafter, unless civilized nations shall agree

that no resort to force shall take place until at least six months after an attempt has been made by The Hague tribunal to effect a reconciliation.

I. While, however, most of the questions relating to the outcome of a war between Japan and the United States have become academic, there are two which retain vitality, and are likely to be discussed until conclusive answers are elicited. Had the treatment of Japanese children by the San Francisco School Board led to hostilities between the Mikado's Empire and the United States, would the text of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty, concluded in 1905, have bound Great Britain to side with Japan against us? Secondly, admitting that the text of the treaty would have bound Great Britain to cooperation, would not the British people have compelled their Government to repudiate the compact?

As regards the former inquiry, there seems to be no doubt that it must be answered in the affirmative. It will be remembered that by the preceding treaty between Great Britain and Japan, the signatories agreed that each would assist the other should either be attacked by two or more great Powers. That treaty rendered impossible a repetition of the combination by which, in 1895, Russia, Germany and France compelled victorious Japan to restore to China the Liao-Tung peninsula and the strip of Manchurian seacoast connecting it with Corea. The present Anglo-Japanese Treaty, which was signed a little before the arrangement of the Peace of Portsmouth, but was not published until afterwards, went much further than its predecessor. It bound each of the signatories to aid the other, provided either should find itself engaged in war with even a single great Power.

This compact, of course, precluded any attempt of a reconstructed Russian navy to engage again in a contest with the Japanese fleet for ascendancy in Far-Eastern waters. On the other hand, it assured Great Britain against a Russian invasion of British India, for that is an enterprise which no Russian commander would undertake if he knew that, before he could cross the Himalayas, the Anglo-Indian army would be strengthened with a hundred thousand Japanese auxiliaries. That is to say, the Japanese now are under a treaty obligation to play the same part in India which the Hessians played on the British side during our Revolutionary war. That his country might be able

to rely on such assistance was, of course, the motive influencing Lord Lansdowne, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, to enter into a treaty, all the advantages of which would otherwise have accrued to Japan.

But, it may be asked, Was not the operation of the treaty limited to Central and Eastern Asia, or, in other words, to that part of the Asiatic Continent which lies east of the Persian Gulf and the Euphrates River? We answer, Yes. But, within the plain intent of the treaty, the Philippines are, geographically and strategically, as much a part of Eastern Asia as is the Japanese archipelago itself. Lord Lansdowne would not, of course, deny that he intended, by the Treaty of 1905, to bind his country to resist an invasion of the Japanese archipelago; how, then, can he escape the conclusion that he also bound England to cooperate in an invasion of the Philippines in the event of Japan's finding herself embroiled with the United States? The text of the treaty contains no clause excluding such a case from the purview of the compact, and Lord Lansdowne, as a far-sighted statesman, can hardly say that he took for granted that no such a case would occur.

As a matter of fact, if the conference at Portsmouth had not resulted in the conclusion of a peace, and if the Far-Eastern War had gone on for an indefinite period, until the Russians had tired out the Japanese, and compelled them to evacuate the Asiatic mainland, the latter, finding themselves confined thereafter to an empire exclusively insular, would have experienced an irresistible impulse to extend their dominion southward, and, as a preliminary step, would have felt themselves constrained to seize the Philippines. It is only because the outcome of the war with Russia has been to give Japan an unshakable foothold on the Asiatic mainland that her face is now turned definitely westward, and the Philippines have ceased to be for her an object of desire.

II. We deem it, then, indisputable that the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of 1905 would have required Great Britain to place her fleets and armies at the disposal of the Japanese, had the latter made war on the United States in consequence of the San Francisco incident. A treaty obligation, however, is one thing; a compliance with it another. We come, therefore, to the question whether the people of Great Britain, aroused to the grave re-

sponsibilities imposed by the compact, would have permitted their Government to adhere to it. This second question we are inclined to answer in the negative. More than once in modern times has an English-speaking people forced its government to repudiate treaty obligations. In the reign of Charles II, that sovereign found himself for a time relieved by a French subsidy from the necessity of seeking supplies of money from Parliament. So exasperated, nevertheless, were the people of England at his agreement to join with Louis XIV in making war upon the Dutch, who, except the English, were the only maritime folk in Europe that then could claim to enjoy self-government, that he was ultimately forced to treat the compact as a dead letter. So, too, in the last decade of the eighteenth century, the members of the Federalist party, then preponderant in the United States, were so incensed at the French Republic, after the execution of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, that they demanded a repudiation of the treaty obligations which we had contracted with France in 1778, and in such repudiation two Federalist Presidents practically concurred, although each recognized that, but for the assistance given us by France during our Revolutionary war, we could hardly have hoped to achieve independence of Great Britain.

Now, it is obvious that the British people to-day would have incomparably stronger reasons for refusing to make war on the United States, in pursuance of the alliance with Japan, than their forefathers had to denounce a treaty that bound them to make war upon Holland, or than the American Federalists had to treat as inoperative the French treaty during the closing years of the eighteenth century. It is true, doubtless, that the Japanese could render efficient service to the defenders of British India against a Russian invasion. Great Britain, however, would be exposed to an injury more vital than would be even the loss of her great Indian dependency, if, through facilitating a Japanese invasion of the Philippines, she were to provoke the United States to war. Undoubtedly, in such a contingency, we should make England pay the penalty for the damage suffered by us at the hands of Japan in the Pacific. We should invade Canada and cut off the grain-fields of British North America from communication with the Atlantic seaboard. With cruisers and with privateers we should do our best to prevent the grain-ships of Argen-

tina from reaching the British Isles. Above all, not an ounce of foodstuffs would be exported from the United States directly to Great Britain during the war, and effective measures would no doubt be taken to prevent such commodities from reaching the United Kingdom indirectly through neutrals.

Such a suspension of our export of food staples would, of course, prove a hardship to American producers, but it would mean starvation for the millions of toilers in British factories and mines. Even if we admit, what is sometimes disputed, that there exists at any given moment in the United Kingdom a stock of food sufficient to nourish the population for six weeks, it is patent that, soon after the expiration of that brief period, the bulk of the British people would be brought to their knees by famine. How long thereafter would the suffering millions permit the British Government to remain faithful to a treaty which imposed upon them such dreadful sacrifices? They would far rather let India go than purchase the retention of it at the cost of a war with the principal source of their food-supplies. The truth is that never again can England afford to face the consequences of a contest with the United States; and, if the present treaty with Japan binds the British Government to risk such an encounter, so much the worse for the treaty. All that we should ask of Great Britain would be that she should remain neutral in a conflict between Japan and the United States. We should not condescend to appeal for England's assistance, for we know that, with our immensely superior resources, we should go on fighting until we had brought the Mikado's Empire to a state of total exhaustion and paralysis.

It would have been better for all concerned if, while the present treaty between Great Britain and Japan was in course of negotiation, Lord Lansdowne had pointed out that, under no circumstances, would England consent to be drawn into a war with her chief food-purveyor, and that, consequently, the possible case of war between Japan and the United States must be expressly excluded from the operation of the treaty. At that time, the summer of 1905, the Tokio Government would have agreed to the insertion of such a clause, because it then was grateful for the tokens of sympathy received from the American people, and had no provision of a quarrel with the United States.

MAYO W. HAZELTINE.